DEMOCRATIC
GERMAN REPORT

Vol. XI No. 21 October 26th 1962 Price: 15 Pf, 5c, 3d.

"WE MUST HAVE COLONIES" – Adenauer

"The German Reich must definitely strive to obtain colonies. In the Reich itself there is too little space for the big population. We are constantly losing just those adventurous and pushing people who find no field for their activities at home; in the colonies they would find a field for their activities. We must have more space for our people, and therefore we must have colonies. ADENAUER"

This striking call for colonies for German imperialism was made thirty-four years ago by Konrad Adenauer, today Chancellor of West Germany. The picture above shows one of the exhibits in the "Colonial Pavilion" at the "Pressa – International Press Exhibition" at Cologne in 1928. Dr Adenauer was at that time Lord Mayor of Cologne. He can scarcely claim that this statement was a "youthful indiscretion" since he had then already reached the ripe age of 52.

Polish Leaders Visit GDR

Leading Polish statesmen, including Wladyslaw Gomulka, First Secretary of the Polish United Workers' Party, and Jozef Cyrankiewicz, Prime Minister, paid a five day visit to the GDR from October 15th to 19th.

In the course of the visit, the Polish delegation visited industrial centres, and held top-level discussions on political and economic problems with GDR leaders. Well-informed Polish and GDR observers stressed that the visit was by no means simply a courtesy visit; very important decisions had been taken, particularly in the field of greatly increased economic cooperation between the two countries. In addition, the visit had shown that Poland stood four-square behind the German Democratic Republic in its efforts to achieve a sensible solution of the West Berlin problem, and conclude a Peace Treaty. The visit had disposed of western propaganda claims that Poland and the GDR had differing points of view on these subjects.

At the conclusion of the visit, Wladyslaw Gomulka addressed the People's Chamber of the GDR, becoming the first Polish statesmen ever to address a German parliament. Here are some of the main points made by Gomulka in his address to the People's Chamber:

"We believe that the possibilities of reaching an agreement on the West Berlin problem have not been exhausted, since it is hard to imagine that the Western powers would choose a path which produced a worse result for them.

"As a result of the refusal of the Western powers to conclude a peace treaty with the two German states, the peace treaty which will be concluded in the near future between the socialist states and the German Democratic Republic will have, as one of its most important features, the solution of the West Berlin problem in accordance with the peaceful interests of all. Every honest person must recognise that this city situated in the centre of the German Democratic Republic cannot be allowed to be a NATO war base.

"The occupation regime in West Berlin has long been an anachronism. West Berlin must become a peaceful demilitarised Free City, which can choose its own social system and to which all states should have free access, respecting at the same time the sovereign rights of the GDR. The proposals in this connection made by the Soviet Union in consultation with the GDR, Poland and the other socialist states do not infringe the rights of others. The Soviet Union has displayed the best will to reach agreement with the Western Powers on a solution of the West Berlin problem before the conclusion of a peace treaty with the GDR; but the time for such a treaty comes ever closer.

"Even if the Western Powers continue to erect obstacles to an agreed solution of the West Berlin problem, then nothing can prevent us concluding a peace treaty with the GDR. This treaty will ensure the GDR full sovereign rights on its territory; this will not infringe the vital interests of other states, but will guarantee the vital interests of our states.

"It is a fact of great historical importance that the GDR is a barrier to the West German policy of militarism and revanchism; that it is a state which recognises all the frontiers of Germany, and supports disarmament, an atom-free Germany, and a peaceful road of development for the whole of Germany.

"The Polish people, the Polish Government and the Polish Party regard it as a basic duty to support the GDR in its struggle to strengthen its sovereignty and security. Poland has a vital interest that never again shall a German imperialist army stand on our western frontiers.

"Security for the German Democratic Republic means security for Poland.

"The Government in Bonn must finally face realities. The frontier between Germany and Poland is inviolable, and the GDR is a fully responsible and sovereign state just like the German Federal Republic.

"German reunification is a matter for historical development. Nobody, including the Bonn Government, sees any realistic possibility of establishing a re-united German state in the near future. The only possibility is the form of a confederation between the two German states, as the GDR has proposed, but it is well known that the Bonn Government has rejected this conception."

Turning to the history of relations between Germany and Poland, Gomulka recalled that it had not been only a history of German militarism and imperialism, though this had created deep differences between the two peoples. However, there had also been a history of close cooperation between the socialist movements of the two countries, and outstanding Polish socialists such as Rosa Luxemburg had also played a great role in the German working class movement.

Gomulka thanked the Socialist Unity Party and the working class of the GDR for the great work done since the Second World War, particularly in the field of training a new generation in the spirit of socialism, internationalism and peace.

"With great courage and political consistency you have told the German people the bitter truth about German imperialism, and the necessity for recognising the new frontiers of Germany.

"The Polish people prize the fact that for the first time in history we do not have an aggressive militarist Germany on our western frontier, but a peaceful, democratic German state."

Turning to economic relations between the GDR and Poland, Gomulka stressed that although there was a high degree of cooperation at present, this could be much extended.

"This year our two states are exchanging goods and services valued

Simple Questions

"British practice over diplomatic recognition (i. e. Yemen, ed.) is governed mainly by whether a new regime is in actual physical control over the whole of its territory."

"Daily Telegraph", London, October 9th

Question 1: Is the Government of the German Democratic Republic in actual physical control over the whole of its territory?

Answer: Yes, and it has been for thirteen years.

Question 2: Why doesn't the British Government recognise the GDR then?

Answer: Because Adenauer does not want it to.

How GDR Helped West German 'Economic Miracle'

"The record of growth in Western Europe since the war is indeed remarkable... It can, of course, be argued that this expansion has not been due to the Common Market, but was generated first by post-war construction, including generous American aid and a plentiful supply of labour from Eastern Germany and Italy."

Prime Minister Harold Macmillan, in a pamphlet published by Conservative Central Office, October 1962

at 315 million New Roubles; Poland is the third most important trade partner of the GDR, and vice versa.

"However, despite what has already been done, our economic and technical cooperation does not yet reach the necessary degree. In future we must co-ordinate long-term economic plans, and in particular co-ordinate our long-term investment programmes."

Gomulka stated that the concentration on the production of various goods either in the GDR or Poland, and the exchange of these goods would be of great advantage to both sides.

"It is not the aim of our agreement to lessen trade with the capitalist countries. On the contrary, we are interested in a further extension of this trade. In distinction to the policy of the imperialist states, and in particular the states of the Common Market, we do not erect customs barriers and other artifical obstacles to the development of trade.

"We oppose all barriers to world trade. The only 'Common Market' which humanity needs is a common world market, free from all discrimination. That is why we favour the calling of a World Trade Conference, which should establish an international trade organisation on the basis of equal rights and respect for national sovereignty."

Elections Postponed

The elections to the People's Chamber of the German Democratic Republic, due for this November, have been postponed until next autumn. On October 20th the People's Chamber took a unanimous decision to extend its period of office "in connection with problems of the international relations of the GDR, and the necessity of working out the Perspective Plan for the period up to 1970".

Political observers in Berlin stated that the decision had been taken in order to avoid holding a general election while far-reaching decisions had to be taken on a German Peace Treaty and the status of West Berlin, and while big changes had to be made in economic planning in connection with the newly-agreed closer collaboration between the socialist states of Europe.

The People's Chamber also agreed to postpone elections to the county councils of the GDR, which are held concurrently with the parliamentary general elections.

Tenth Most Important Industrial State

The German Democratic Republic now ranks tenth among the industrial states of the world, the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party announced in its report to the 6th Congress of the Party, which will be held in Berlin in January 1963. The report stressed that this leading position had been reached despite the unfavourable starting position at the end of World War Two. The GDR had built itself up into a flourishing industrial state despite great war destruction, large reparation payments, and the fact that the partitioning of Germany had left the eastern part of the country cut off from essential raw materials.

In the past four years, since the 5th Congress of the Socialist Unity Party in 1958, special factors had slowed the planned increase in productivity and accumulation. The West German policy of political, ideological and economic aggression against the GDR had led to the loss of valuable skilled labour, and large sums had had to be invested to screen the economy of the GDR against economic attack by West Germany.

"This slowed the increase in productivity and accumulation, while at the same time wages rose faster than planned," the report stated. This meant that the national income was distributed to the disadvantage of accumulation, which led to a reduction in the speed of construction of some important branches of basic industry; and this in its turn prevented a further increase in the standard of living."

The report stated that it had been planned to increase investment in heavy industry by 6.5 thousand million marks between 1959 and 1961, but in fact the increase had been only 3.3 thousand million marks.

"This produced a disproportion between purchasing power and available goods; in order to overcome this state of affairs, it is urgently necessary to develop basic industry. These new investments should be concentrated in the chemical industry and the machine industry. This will demand a considerable period of hard work, since it is necessary both to make up for lost ground and to increase the proportion of accumulation.

"At the same time the aggressive policy of West Germany makes it necessary to overcome our economic dependence on West Germany, and to take further measures to guard the frontiers of the GDR. To a certain extent these measures will have to be taken at the cost of developments already envisaged in long term planning.

"All these factors have to be taken into consideration in assessing correctly the successes attained by the GDR in comparison with West Germany. The GDR is today one of the ten leading industrial states of the world."

Reporting at the beginning of October to the meeting of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party which prepared the agenda for the January Congress, First Secretary Walter Ulbricht stressed that at present, despite its great progress, the GDR was still dependent upon generous credits from the Soviet Union in order to balance its economic plan. Measures would have to be taken so that such credits would no longer be necessary, he stated.

In his speech Walter Ulbricht forecast far-reaching changes in the whole system of planning and of management of socialist industry. Without committing himself to any decision, he drew attention to the "interesting economic discussion" at present in progress in the Soviet Union on making more use in socialist planning and industry of "economic factors such as prices, financing and profit rates". Some of the proposals made in the course of this basic economic discussion in the Soviet Union were not at present applicable in the GDR, he warned, but GDR economists and financial experts must consider very seriously to what extent such economic concepts could be applied.

GDR Figures

Gross industrial production in the GDR has risen from 58 thousand million marks in 1958 to 80 thousand million marks (planned figure) in 1962. In the same period average wages have risen by 17% and retail trade turnover by 27%.

•

In 1961 the GDR spent 1210 marks per head of the population for education, culture, health services and scientific research. The equivalent figure in West Germany was 580 marks per head of the population.

Towards a German Policy

By Walter Lippmann

... The negotiations (on West Berlin), of course, have no chance to succeed without the consent and collaboration of the West German government. For this is, we must never forget, not only a Soviet and an Allied problem. It is primarily a German problem.

Yet there is not now a true political understanding about the future of Berlin and of Germany between Bonn and Washington. We must hope the basis of such an understanding can be laid down during Chancellor Adenauer's coming visit to Washington and that the understanding can be worked out while he is still the German Chancellor.

The paramount practical issue upon which significant negotiations depend and around which they will revolve is the degree of recognition which the Western Allies will accord to the East German state. Western withdrawal from Berlin is not, as we have all said again and again, a negotiable question. But the degree of recognition of and the kind of relationship with East Germany are eminently negotiable questions.

Thus, commercial surface traffic with West Berlin has for years been regulated by a Bonn-Pankow trade agreement and has been administered by East German officials. It is sheer nonsense, therefore, to talk as if there has been or could be such a thing as absolute non-recognition. The practical question is how much more recognition and of what kind there is to be.

It is fashionable to treat any further recognition of East Germany as a concession made at the expense of West Germany. I believe this to be a fallacy, and I submit that it is only by increasing economic, scientific, social, and political contact that the two Germanys can eventually be reunited peaceably.

The official view is that East Germany must have no recognition which implies that it is in fact a state, and that no country anywhere in the world (except the Soviet Union itself) may have an ambassador in Bonn if it also sends an ambassador to Pankow. The official view of reunification is that East Germany is to be given the chance to vote itself out of the Communist orbit and out of the Soviet alliance in order to join West Germany and the Western alliance.

This is, and always has been, a pipe dream, and nobody who has studied the German question believes that there is anything in it. The world is rent by a momentous power struggle between the Soviet Union and the West, and it is inconceivable that the Soviet Union will, while it has the power to prevent it, agree to a united Germany of 70 million people within the NATO alliance.

Indeed, the official view of reunification is so patently impossible that, when it is put forward by responsible statesmen, it arouses suspicions. To propose reunification on what are known to be impossible terms is in fact not to propose reunification at all.

And in truth, Dr Adenauer's great friend Gen. de Gaulle is not in favor of German reunification and avoided the discussion of it during his recent tour of Germany. The British government is, to put it mildly, reluctant to see Germany reunited. The Low Countries do not want reunification, and it would be difficult to say with much certainty that Dr. Adenauer, who is an anti-Prussian from the Rhineland, has any burning desire to be reunited with the Prussians and the Saxons.

It can surely be said that the official formula of reunification by plebiscite is an obstacle to the reunification of Germany, not a method of achieving it. That may be one of the reasons why so many people who do not want a big Germany pay lip service to it.

Yet, despite the unavowed but very general objections to German reunification, I for one believe that the two Germanys must be and should be reunited. How? Once we fix it in our minds that the two Germanys cannot be reunited by Soviet surrender, the only conceivable way, I submit, is to start from the situation as it is. This means recognizing that there are two German states, and then providing ways and means by which they can live side by side and, as Germans with Germans, work out in detail and by concrete experience their national unity. As I see it, the two Germanys are a cloth which has been torn apart. The task of reunification is to reweave into one whole the two unsightly parts.

("New York Herald Tribune", October 18th 1962)

GDR BARS NBC

Reporters and cameramen of the US National Broadcasting Company (NBC) will in future be barred from the German Democratic Republic including its capital East Berlin, the Ministry of the Interior announced on October 18th. "Employees of this company recently financed and abetted a dangerous attack on the frontier of the GDR," the official announcement said.

It was learned that West Berlin representatives of NBC recently advanced $10,000 dollars to finance the building of a 150 yard long tunnel under the state frontier of the GDR, in return for exclusive rights to film a dramatically staged "escape" through the tunnel. The film showing details of this NBC-financed frontier provocation was due to be shown on the country-wide NBC network on October 29th.

The GDR ban on NBC newsmen was the first limitation ever imposed by the German Democratic Republic on the work of foreign newsmen in East Berlin. Other western journalists will be able to visit East Berlin freely as hitherto.

Commenting on the tunnels driven under the GDR state frontier in Berlin by western agents, the Washington correspondent of "The Times", London, commented on October 10th: "Some of the scarlet pimpernels who have organised the escape of east Germans into west Berlin are now believed to be hired agents pursuing a lucrative business ... This has obvious dangers. Is the west expected to defend this commerce?"

The right-wing American news magazine "Time" reported on October 5th: "The Wall has also spawned entrepreneurs who manage to get people out, at the same time lining their own pockets ... The most notorious of this greedy breed is a muscle-bound ex-butcher nicknamed Der Dicke (Fat Boy), a former black marketeer with many contacts in East Berlin ... Der Dicke began dickering with the representatives of US and British TV networks, proposing to sell them the rights to an on-the-spot filming ... 'Tunnel 59' was reportedly financed, among others, by NBC-TV in return for film rights."

"SPY ON ENGLAND" MAN GETS TOP BONN JOB

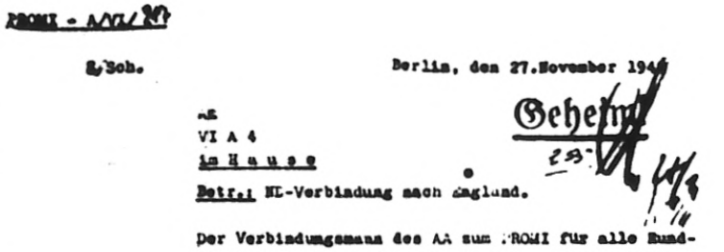
Dr Kurt-Georg Kiesinger, who became President of West Germany's Upper House, or Bundesrat on October 26th, was a leading nazi propaganda officer who urged sending more spies to Britain during the war.

Kiesinger, a prominent politician in Chancellor Adenauer's Christian Democratic Union, is Prime Minister of Baden-Wuerttemberg province in West Germany, and therefore a member of the Bundesrat, which is made up of top leaders from all provinces. The Bundesrat, now headed by Dr Kiesinger, must approve all laws in West Germany before they become valid.

The President of the Bundesrat takes over from the Federal President when he is incapacitated.

Documents found in the secret files of Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry show that during the war Dr Kiesinger was liaison officer between the nazi Foreign Ministry and the Radio Section of the Propaganda Ministry. In this capacity he laid down the political line to be followed by "Lord Haw-Haw" (William Joyce, executed for treason in Britain in 1945).

On this page we reproduce the first paragraphs of a secret report linking Dr Kiesinger with intelligence activities against Britain. The translation of the report reads as follows:



Berlin, den 27.November 194

Geheim

VI A 4

Betr.: NL-Verbindung nach England.

Der Verbindungsmann des AA zum ROMI für alle Rundfunkfragen, Dr. K i e s i n g e r, äusserte sich im Verlauf der Frühbesprechung vom 24.11. unter vollster Zustimmung von Professor H u n k e sehr kritisch über die Leistungen des Wirtschaftsfunks für das Ausland. Bei dieser Gelegenheit stellte er fest, es sei fast nicht zu glauben und stelle eine Unmöglichkeit dar, dass man deutscherseits fast keine Verbindungen nach England besitze. Man sei über die wirkliche in England herrschende Lage nicht unterrichtet. In dieser immerhin auch kriegsentscheidenden Frage dürften somit alle Stellen versagt haben.

Berlin, November 27th 1942

SECRET

Subject: Intelligence Links with England.

Dr Kiesinger, liaison officer of the Foreign Ministry with the Propaganda Ministry responsible for all radio questions, was very critical at the morning conference on November 24th about the achievements of the economic transmissions for foreign countries; he received full backing from Professor Hunke. In this connection he said that it was almost unbelievable, and was a quite impossible situation, that on the German side there were practically no connections with Britain. One was not informed about the real situation in England. This was a question decisive for the war, but all branches concerned appeared to have failed. This situation was quite unbearable. There was plenty of traffic between Sweden and Britain. Apparently it had not been possible up to the present to utilise this situation for intelligence purposes, and thus to receive useful and correct information from England. One did not even know in Germany what food was served in English restaurants, how big the portions were, what you could get off-the-ration in restaurants, how the general supply situation was, etc. On the German side one was practically forced to invent reports on these subjects, basing oneself on the smallest speck of reality.

It must be possible to find suitable persons, preferably neutral citizens, who could be brought in touch with the English in Sweden, and who could perhaps then themselves fly to England.

He asked Professor Hunke for a longer talk on this subject in the near future. Professor Hunke and several officials of Department A. pointed out that it should be in the first place the job of the diplomatic mission to establish connections. The Foreign Ministry representative gave no reply to this ...

Trying to Gag Richard Crossman

The West German chairman of a public round-table talk in Dusseldorf, West Germany, tried to gag Richard Crossman, British MP, when he insisted on calling the GDR by its proper name of "German Democratic Republic".

When Mr Crossman referred to things he had seen during a recent visit to the GDR, the chairman of the meeting, leading Social Democratic politician Kurt Baurichter, interrupted him and said: "We do not say GDR here; our directive is to call it Pankow". Crossman replied: "But I say GDR. The fact that I can say it, and you cannot, shows that you are not allowed to say some things here."

Continuing his speech, Mr Crossman said: "If you can't destroy the GDR in a war, then you simply have to co-exist with the GDR."

After the attempt to gag Crossman, the other British partner in the round-table talk, John Midgley, Bonn correspondent of the London "Economist", who had hitherto referred to the GDR as "East Germany", demonstratively began to call it "the so-called GDR".

Later in the discussion, Georg Schroeder, Bonn correspondent of the West German newspaper "Die Welt" shouted: "What we should do is to liquidate the illegal state of the so-called GDR within 24 hours. Then we would hang the guilty men like the security policemen were hung in Budapest. That is what we would like to do, believe me; but we can't do it because of the Russian divisions."

BERLIN FESTIVAL

By Allen Mann

For the sixth successive year, East Berlin has had its cultural festival — sixteen days packed solid with premières, guest performances and cultural events of almost every kind imaginable. For those with the time, tickets and energy, there was something to do every evening.

Perhaps the highlight of the festival was the visit of the Leningrad ballet, which played twelve evenings to 36,000 people and was welcomed with great enthusiasm and a mad scramble for tickets. Other foreign visitors included the violinist Igor Oistrakh, who is rapidly becoming a rival to his virtuoso father David, an amusing and intriguing pantomime ensemble from Wroclaw, Poland, and the Realistic Theatre of Prague (as well as the Prague Symphony Orchestra).

Nearly all of East Berlin's nine legitimate theatres had something to offer for the occasion. The famous "Berliner Ensemble" produced Bertold Brecht's last play, "The Days of the Commune", a fascinating description of the Paris Commune of 1871, with sharp accents on problems of today's world as in all of Brechts's works. The music for the play was by Brecht's close friend Hanns Eisler, who died a few weeks before the première.

The little "Maxim Gorki Theatre" on Unter den Linden made a great hit with a play by the young Czech author Pavel Kohout, whose plays have always been popular here. The play, "80 Days Around the World", was not a dramatisation of the famous Jules Verne book but rather a modern parody which poked good-natured fun at just about everything, from the aristocratic London club members in the book to the heavier-handed propaganda employed in Czechoslovakia (or the GDR).

The best feature of the performance was the terrific pace with which scenes were changed, gags and new surprise effects fired off, and costumes changed. Except for the four main parts, almost all actors played ten to fifteen roles, including lions, movable statues and even a few shaky wardrobes. Yet none of it was really too hammy, and the audience loved every minute of it.

The "Deutsches Theater" offered a new play called "Die Sorgen und die Macht" (which might be translated as Problems and Power) by Peter Hacks, a young writer who moved to the GDR from West Germany several years ago. His play deals with current problems in the GDR — the relationship between plan-fulfilment and quality in factories, together with all the personal and political questions so intricately tied up with these relationships. The play is by no means deadly dull, however. It not only has an up-to-date "boy meets girl" angle but abounds in sparkling, witty dialogue. It has also already set off several waves of controversy amongst the theatre critics.

"Florian Geyer", a play by the famous German playwright Gerhart Hauptmann, whose 100th anniversary is being celebrated this year, was the première offered festival goers by the "Volksbuehne" theatre, and the "Theater der Freundschaft" presented several new dramas for the younger set, as usual carefully noting each time which age group (ranging from 4 to 18) the play was directed at. A children's opera was also offered.

A very successful dramatic treat was the visiting Dresden State Theatre's "Troilus and Cressida". I was not able to see this, but am told that they did a very fine job, using a very modern, racy translation which did more justice to Shakespeare than some of the slightly dusty translations used occasionally. In any case, the strong anti-war sentiments put over by Shakespeare with his most biting humour went over wonderfully with the very enthusiastic audience.

By the way, Shakespeare has definitely lost none of his popularity in East Berlin, even outside the Festival programme. "King Lear", "Twelfth Night", "Comedy of Errors" and "Macbeth" have all been on the stage in recent months, and "Merry Wives of Windsor" and a Bertolt Brecht adaptation of "Coriolanus" are planned for the near future.

The State Opera House also had its premières — a performance of "Tannhaeuser" to mark the beginning of Richard Wagner year (his sesquicentennial has come around) and a programme of two smaller works; Igor Stravinsky's "The Story of the Soldier" and a humourous work called "An Electronic Love" by the French composer Joseph Kosma. In it a woman scientist in the year 2000 falls in love with a highly-perfected but unresponsive robot she has made. Her jealous husband destroys his rival by giving it an impossible problem to solve (squaring the circle) and waiting till it explodes.

Other premières included "Peace" by Aristophanes, "The Man from England" about an English teacher in West Germany, and a play about cooperative farms and their problems. Then there were many plays by amateur groups, poetry evenings, song and dance reviews and a political cabaret programme by the immensely funny "Distel" (Thistle) group. There was also an open-air book bazaar on Schoenhauser Allee, one of East Berlin's busiest streets, and there was even an international dancing competition with competing couples from Britain, Poland, France and other countries.

In other words, there was something for everyone, and thousands of people from other parts of the GDR came by chartered bus to visit the festival attractions. West Germans came too, as did visitors from many other countries, east and west.

But now that the strenuous sixteen evenings are past, most theatre and concert enthusiasts here are interested in one main thing — catching up on lost sleep. Then they will begin to revert to the most common schedule here — about one theatre visit a month.

Taste Good?

Probably not, but the story about Renate (the girl in the cover photo) and her ideals is interesting enough. So are the stories about the woman who rose from poultry keeper to State Council member (and stayed poultry-raiser) and the excerpts from "Frau Flinz", most-discussed current play in the GDR.

For a sample copy, write to
GDR Review
Spenerstrasse 21
Dresden A 19
German Democratic Republic

Please specify whether you prefer English, German, French, Danish, Swedish, Spanish or Finnish. (This offer only applies to readers outside the German Democratic Republic.)

IRON TONIC

By Doreen Sachs

Rusty, in spite of reading and evening classes, I returned to teaching—and was immediately sure that of all subjects foreign languages blur most easily. Basic knowledge remains but the ability to talk and think in another language is lost; anyway languages change in structure and idiom, and people write more books. "A Refresher Course" says the familiar voice of officialdom. But where and how can a married woman with two children take a modern language refresher course without neglecting husband or family—and still have a summer holiday?

Various possibilities for brushing up modern languages came, family holidays in Germany and France—very enjoyable, but not quite what I was after. Then in May this year a prospectus for a three-week course in Erfurt came into my hands. The course was tempting: modern tendencies in language and literature, seminars on modern German authors, visits to cities which I had never seen—Goethe's house in Frankfurt was already familiar but not the house in Weimar where he had spent the main part of his life. But there were problems still. It was "the other side." What about my husband and children? Would I find it too exhausting to spend half my precious summer holiday working? Would I be able to read up the set literature in time for the course?

In reply to my inquiries I had an extremely friendly helpful letter offering my husband and me places at the summer course—my husband is not a teacher but has a deep interest in German literature. My children were offered places in a Pionierlager, a children's summer camp.

As the course drew nearer and the school year came to its exhausting end all the doubts redoubled, accentuated by friends and acquaintances "hoping we should survive," "hoping we should return safely," "hoping we should not be too indoctrinated." I left by air for Erfurt via Frankfurt leaving my family to follow on by car a week later.

My travelling companions on the train from Frankfurt to Erfurt were comfortable middle-aged German women visiting relations "on the other side." They regaled me with stories of how they and various relations had smuggled money and goods from East to West and commented how unkind it was of the East German authorities to tighten up the border control. My visa was waiting for me at a small village on the frontier (I had looked at numerous maps in England without being able to find this place, and had wondered if the whole project would turn out to be a Kafka nightmare). At Erfurt, at the prearranged meeting place—the flower stall, shades of "Emil and the Detectives"—I was met by two of the lecturers with a car. Everything now settled down.

Some of our fellow-students had been told they would end up in Siberia. Their relations had said good-bye to them for ever, and two of us (not from Britain) had not dared to tell their school colleagues where they were going. It was almost a disappointment to find we could go where we wanted, photograph what we liked, talk to and question anybody in the streets, in cafés, in trams (this we did all the time).

The literature seminars were without exception informative and illuminating, and we had some heated discussions, often our national backgrounds influencing our interpretation of texts (for example, a difference of emphasis between Scottish and English teachers on the characters of the queens in "Maria Stuart").

The lectures varied in interest, but I entertained myself in the one or two boring ones by listing foreign words (principally French, though some English) now apparently acceptable in current literary German style.

Films, lantern slides, discussions in the evenings, a party the first week to welcome us, a farewell party the last night, two day-excursions to Weimar—Goethe and Schiller lived here, Liszt and Herder, and here too was one of the most terrible concentration camps; three days in Dresden, city of museums and art galleries, a visit to a newly built block of flats, to a harvest combine works, to a children's camp, to the International Gardening Exhibition Park, to a collective farm. In all this our lecturers accompanied us, answered our questions, exchanged viewpoints, tried to explain what we did not understand, tried to understand what we found unacceptable. They saw to it at the beginning that no one of the group—thirty-six of us from five different countries—was left out, that we all got to know each other quickly. We found them as individuals, cultured, sophisticated, friendly.

What did we do on our own? We went to the hairdresser, we went shopping, we went to the pictures, we went to church services, we went sightseeing, visiting friends, we went to the Polyklinik—several of us needed minor medical help (too much excitement, too much food)—and we relaxed and ate cream cakes and drank coffee, expensive but excellent.

My children? A boy of 10, a girl of nearly 9, spent the two weeks sleeping under canvas, about fifty miles from us. They understood a certain amount of German before they went, could express certain basic needs. They did all the things that go with a camp—campfires, night walks through the woods, swimming, boating; they also visited the local castle and the local car factory; they played their recorders at the camp concert and received great applause. They wrote to us each day and we visited them on the Sunday when they proudly showed us round the camp. They learnt quite a lot more German, grew more sophisticated and independent, used apparently no soap for a whole fortnight, and returned to civilisation with more sense of appreciation of it and of their parents.

We found that we had all gained a tremendous amount from the holiday. My husband and I had enjoyed our first fortnight without the children since they had been born (any parent will sigh at the thought of this bliss). We had coped with the spectre of "behind the Iron Curtain." We returned feeling more convinced than ever that the differences which separate East and West today are far easier to bridge by understanding than to obliterate by propaganda or war. The problem is not small but it is not impossible to solve.

("The Guardian", Manchester, September 26th)

One-Class Schools Vanish

The last "one-class" village school, in which pupils of all ages were taught in one room by one teacher, was abolished in the GDR in 1960. West German today still has well over 8000 such one-class village schools, and the number is still rising.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

I am glad to announce that after months of search, GERMAN REPORT has finally found a new and rather more spacious office in East Berlin. At the end of October we are moving to this new office: our new address is given in the box at the foot of this page. Our telephone number remains the same.

People who have visited us in our old office have often complained at the three flights of stairs they have to toil up: I am sorry to say they will have the same difficulty in the future, since the new office, like the old, is three flights up, with no lift.

No. 2, Berlin

For visitors from the West, our new office is simplicity itself to find. You just go through the international frontier point at Checkpoint Charlie, take the very first turn to the right, enter the second door on the right, clamber three flights, and there you are. Our address might therefore very well be Number Two East Berlin, seen from this perspective, but please don't try addressing letters like that.

Able, Baker

Just while I am on the subject of Checkpoint Charlie, I might explain how this frontier point got such a flippant name. The United States Army has, for the past ten or fifteen years, maintained military checkpoints at both ends of the Autobahn across the German Democratic Republic from West Germany to West Berlin. The checkpoint at Helmstedt, West Germany is called Checkpoint Able (from the US Army telephone alphabet); the checkpoint at the entrance to West Berlin is called Checkpoint Baker; so it was quite logical, when a third checkpoint was established after August 13th 1961, to call it Checkpoint Charlie. Strictly speaking, of course, this refers only to the American checkpoint on the West Berlin side of the border, but since the GDR frontier station has the rather unwieldy title of "Ausländerübergangspunkt Zimmerstrasse", the memorable and alliterative name of Checkpoint Charlie seems a handier handle.

Talking of telephone alphabets, I wonder if any reader can supply me with the full list of the weird and wonderful trick alphabet which was thought up in the western desert by telephonists of the British Eighth Army. I can only recall the first three letters, which went like this:

A for Orses
B for Mutton
C for Thailanders

If you don't get the point, try reading them rapidly aloud.

Southport Sage

I have got a lot of quiet enjoyment out of a full page article entitled "Journey into 'Paradise'" printed by the British provincial weekly "Southport Visitor" on October 6th.

The author, Mr Westall Walker, apparently a Southport businessman, visited East Berlin this summer.

His first shock came when he met some friends who live in the GDR; but let me quote him:

"At first I had difficulty in recognising my friends. It was thirty years since I had seen them — a young married couple ... I could scarcely believe that the weary and wan-looking couple who came forward to greet me were the same people."

So you see, living in a socialist state makes you get older. Later in the article, Mr Walker tells of the hard life his weary and wan friends have to endure:

"My friend told me that he and his wife, both professional people, after reaching the age of 65 a year or so ago, had been granted pensions equivalent to 90 percent of their salaries. But as technicians and professional people are in short supply they were asked if they would keep on working for a while. This they did. They then received two pensions amounting each to 90 percent of former salaries, plus two full salaries for their present duties. Almost four salaries for two people. 'We are quite comfortably off' said my friend, 'and last year I purchased a brand-new four-door Wartburg saloon car'."

But Mr Walker was in for a real shock when he went to a restaurant in East Berlin:

"After a few moments, the waiter, a youth of about 18, approached. He was neatly dressed in black with a bow-tie, but he was not as deferential as waiters mostly are in the West. He handed the menu to my friend in a manner which suggested that both men were of equal social status."

Note for Southport waiters: Remember to bow and scrape to Mr Westall Walker, otherwise he'll have you taped as a dangerous red.

Berlin Wall

The GDR film company DEFA has just issued a very interesting film on the post-war history of Berlin, the partitioning of the city, and the reasons for the Berlin wall. The film, called in German "Schaut auf diese Stadt" (Look at this City) is being distributed in English in Britain by Plato Films Ltd., of 164 Shaftesbury Avenue, London W. C. 1, under the title "The Wall has Two Sides" and I would urge readers in Britain who are interested to try and arrange a showing.

It is a full-length documentary, and tells you the other side of the story to that which is being dished up all the time in western papers and TV.

Bash

On October 14th, the London Sunday newspaper "The People" had a bash at the film which I found rather enlightening. This much-read but little-regarded newspaper stated: "The film is no more than a catalogue of lies and twisted, bitterly-worded half-truths. The film is made with great subtlety. It plays on the emotions with insidious cleverness."

But the paper makes no attempt to back up its charges of lies. The real reason for its opposition comes further down in the article, where "The People" states: "It could plant the seeds of doubt in the minds of people at a time when the West must stand firm on the Berlin issue."

That lets the cat out of the bag. People should not see this film because it might make them doubt the soft-soap and pap they are being fed on the Berlin issue. All the more reason for seeing it, and making up your own mind.

Change of Address

Our new address is:
GERMAN REPORT
9 Krausen Strasse
Berlin W 8
German Democratic Republic

Edited and published fortnightly by John Peet. Democratic German Report, Krausenstrasse 9, Berlin W 8, Telephone 22 29 68. Printed in Germany by (204). Veröffentlicht unter Lizenz-Nr. 694 beim Presseamt des Ministerpräsidenten der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik.